

ART. XVI.—*A Medieval Road in Furness.* BY PAUL V. KELLY.

Read at Penrith, September 16th, 1926.

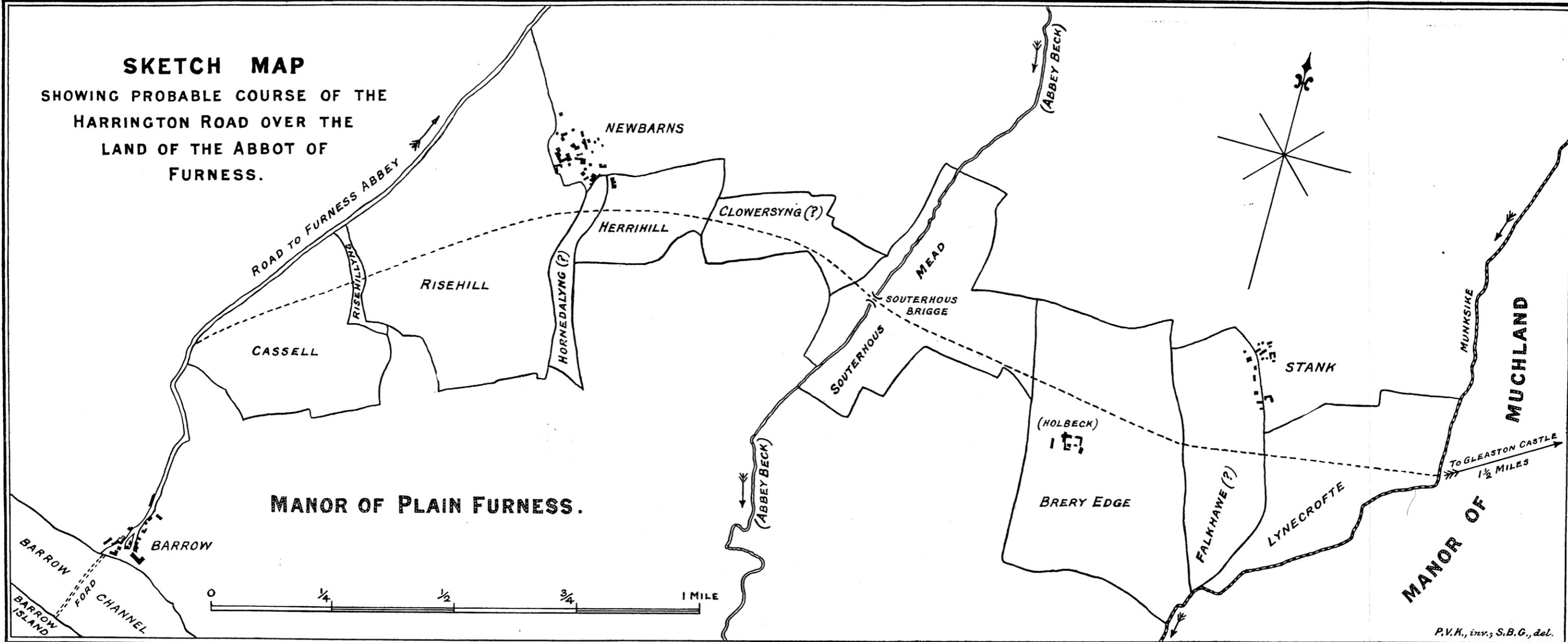
AMONG the charters of the Duchy of Lancaster now in the Public Record Office is one (Duchy of Lancs. Ancient Deeds, L 396), dated 10th May, 1433, which is a grant by Robert, abbot and the monks of the Abbey of Furness to Sir William de Harington and Margaret his wife, of a right of way to and from their castle of Gleaston and the manor of Muchland, over the abbot's land, meadow and pasture in Dalton, up to Barray, either on foot or with all manner of carriages and horses; the right not to extend to their men and tenants dwelling within the precincts of the said manor.

The existence of this charter was first made known in 1869, when an abstract of it was printed in the "Appendix to the Thirty-first Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records," p. 170. In Mr. Gaythorpe's and Mr. Kendall's time, this abstract, giving only the bare outline of the grant with the names of the parties and witnesses, was the only printed source of information available, and both of them, as well as subsequent writers, agreed in assigning the line of this road to the present highway from Gleaston to Roose, and thence by an old bridle-path from Roose smithy, over the Salthouse land, and along what is now Greengate Street to the old village of Barrow.

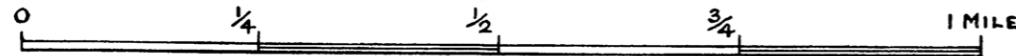
In 1919, however, Mr. John Brownbill, in the last volume of the *Furness Coucher Book* (Vol. ii, Part III, pp. 789-790), printed the full text of the charter, and in this the extent and direction of the road is fully detailed, with an interesting list of names of the fields it traversed in its course.

SKETCH MAP

SHOWING PROBABLE COURSE OF THE
HARRINGTON ROAD OVER THE
LAND OF THE ABBOT OF
FURNESS.



MANOR OF PLAIN FURNESS.



P.V.K., inv., S.B.G., del.

On comparing these ancient place names with the names of the modern enclosures, it will be found that most of them have survived in a more or less corrupt form, and occur in a regular sequence, so that it becomes possible to plot out almost exactly the line of the old right of way. Of the four fields the position of which cannot now be determined with certainty, it is likely that the names had disappeared before the period of the Inclosure Acts, as the fields which now occupy their probable situations, bear the usual matter of fact names, such as Long Croft, Gibson Close, Hare Hill and the like, which probably originated about that time.

The general direction will be found to be much further to the north than that originally suggested, and to run in a fairly straight line from Gleaston Castle to Barrow. It is unlikely that anything in the nature of a metalled road would be constructed, and the route selected would follow the headlands of the various open fields. The *viae* referred to, would be but the most primitive of tracks leading from one townfield to another. At that time the only road in Furness would be the highway leading from the Abbey to Dalton and Ulverston in the one direction, and to Barrow in the other, and the necessity for this charter shows that the public road from Roose to Gleaston and Aldingham did not then exist.

No indication is given as to the purpose for which this exclusive right of way was required. Possibly Sir William contemplated joining the abbot in some shipping venture of greater magnitude than could be carried on from the beach at Aldingham. At Barrow there was a port which besides being in a sheltered position was most convenient to the Abbey. The abbots of Furness had long been shipowners. The late W. B. Kendall in his unpublished "Muchland and its Owners" states, though he does not give his authority, that Abbot Alexander Walton (1347-67)

owned a large ship, the Mari cogge* "trading to divers lands and dominions for victuals for the monks and on other business for them." Later in 1386 an order was made that vessels should be found in Furness to aid in carrying the king's men over to Ireland. (*V.C.H. Lancs.*, viii, p. 287).

The abbot had licence to import a considerable amount of grain every year from Ireland, and Sir William may have joined him in the business, as he likewise had large possessions in Ireland, *i.e.* the property in co. Limerick inherited from his ancestress Elizabeth Multon of Egremont. The extent and bounds of this road as set forth in the charter are as follows:—

... "de le Munksike per angulum cujusdam muri lapidii, sequendo murum illum ex parte australi usque ad summitatem de le Lynecrofte et sic deorsum per le Lynecrofte usque quandam angulam ejusdem muri et abinde extranverso per spatium cxx pedum usque le Falkhawe versus occidentem et abinde usque ad quandam portam cujusdam clausi vocati le Breryedge et sic sequendo viam que ducit de Porta illa usque ad quandam aliam portam ex altera parte clausi predicti vocatam le Souterhous yate, et abinde ultra le Souterhous brigge per le Clowersyng usque Herrihill versus occidentem et abinde ultra le Hornedaleyng usque quandam viam super Risehill et sic sequendo viam illam ultra Risehillyng usque ad le Whyunnyhawe et abinde sequendo viam super Cassell usque ad altam viam que ducit de abbathia de Fourneys usque ad Barray predictum"....

The country over which this route passes is of an undulating character consisting of parallel ridges, the highest point being about 250 feet above sea level and with small valleys between. The most considerable of these valleys is that containing the ruins of the Abbey of Furness, which at its lower end expands into flat wet

* A cogge was a type of ship in use during the Middle Ages, broadly built with rounded prow and stern, which appears to have gone out of use after the 15th century. The crew were known as "Cogmen" whence originated the term "Cogware," applied to any kind of coarse cloth, originally manufactured specially for them out of inferior grades of wool. (*N.E.D. s.v. Cog.* See also these *Trans. N.S.*, xxii, 87.)

meadows drained by the Abbey or Mill Beck. The charter granting this private way-leave naturally refers only to that portion of the route which crossed the abbot's land in Dalton parish, and the direction chosen from Gleaston to the boundary of the Harington manor of Muchland can only be a matter of conjecture. The two manors at this point were divided by a tiny stream, the Monksike. It still forms the boundary between the parishes of Dalton and Dendron, and is now simply the "Sike," the fields which it drains being the "Sike Meadows."

The Lynecrofte, now in five enclosures, was a large tract of land to the south of Stank village. Very little flax appears to have been grown in Furness except for purely domestic use and this, along with hemp, was cultivated in small garths near the villages known as Hemplands. The extent of this field, however, shows that it must have been grown here on a larger scale than elsewhere, possibly to supply linen to the Abbey for vestments and altar linen.

Between the Lynecroft and the opposite ridge is a narrow valley which is traversed by the present road from Newton and Stank to Old Holebeck. Crossing the valley, the direct route was maintained to the highest point on the opposite ridge. This was in all probability the Falkhawe of the charter but that name has now disappeared. From here the land slopes in a north-westerly direction to the valley containing the Abbey ruins.

The next field in order was the Breryedge. This is now Briar Hedge on the Holebeck estate. In the Valuation of 1537 it is spelt Brear Hagge and was comprised within the Abbey demesne. An old husbandry way across it from Holebeck farm probably represents the line of the route. From the Breryedge it passed through the Souterhouse gate and by the Clowersyng and thence over Souterhouse bridge. The Clowersyng is another name that has disap-

peared but that of Southerhouse is still recognisable in the corrupt form of Southers meadow on the Bridge Gate Farm. Southerhouse was a tenement belonging to the Abbey which at the Dissolution was valued at £1 2s. per year. The old husbandry way referred to is carried over the wet meadows of the valley on a raised causeway, and crosses the stream by a small stone bridge constructed of limestone rubble with a few dressed red sandstone blocks. It is impossible to tell from its present appearance, whether the bridge is of earlier date than the inclosures, but it in all likelihood occupies the same site as the Southerhouse brigue. The modern name for this flat, marshy tract of land is Long Meadow. Thence the way continued to the westward, crossing the next ridge by a depression over fields known as Beacon Gill meadows.

The name of Beacon Gill, anciently Bekansgil, seems to apply to the whole valley. Professor Ekwall (*"Place Names of Lancashire,"* p. 203), derives the first element from an O.N. personal name "Bekan," but it is possible that the name may have been assimilated from the proximity of the neighbouring Beacon Hills, both of which overlook the valley, one just above the Abbey ruins, and the other at its mouth near Rampside. This possibility is further strengthened by the fact that the Beacon Gill meadow on our route is spelt in the 1537 Valuation "Begynhylmede."

The way then proceeded by the Herrihill, and over the Hornedaleyng to a certain road over Risehill. The Herrihill, now Harrel, was one of the Newbarns townfields, but the position of Hornedaleyng is uncertain.* It may

* Commenting on the meanings of these names our President says "Clowersyng might be read or pronounced Clovers-ing. There is a 'clover hill' in Colne (Lancs.) according to Ekwall, meaning *clover*: and perhaps as we have Lynecrofte, Breryedge and Whynnyhawe—and Risehill must be 'brushwood hill'—perhaps this ing or meadow might be named from its natural growth. Soutergate, Professor Ekwall derives from souter, a shoemaker, and if he is right the Southerhouse would be the 'cobblers.' Hornedale, as a long strip, is parallel with his Horncliff, from 'horn,' not the personal name."

possibly denote a long strip of meadow land known as Rising Side meadows which in the eighteenth century was used by the Newbarns tenants as water meadows. Rise-hill, now the Risedales, was the largest townfield in the Plain Furness manor and was owned jointly by the hamlets of Salthouse, Newbarns and Hawcoat.

After crossing the Risedales and Risedale Ings, the latter a narrow outlying strip of meadow belonging to Hawcoat, the road continued by the Whynnyhawe and, following a road over Cassell, joined the highway leading from the Abbey to the village of Barrow. The Whynnyhawe as a field-name is lost, but the Cassell is the last hill on the route, after which the land sinks to the sea level. The whole of this hill is now included within the Public Park of Barrow, and its summit, 75 feet high, is occupied by the Barrow War Memorial. On the original Ordnance Map of 1849 it is called Black Castle but this is evidently a mistake for Back Castle. Previous to the purchase of the land by the Barrow Corporation the hill was divided into a number of fields known as Fore Castle, Back Castle, Wells Castle, and Castle Pots. It is the only portion of the old townfields of Barrow village that has not been built upon. Castle Pots is probably a corruption of Castle Butts, the short strips of plough land in the open fields, shorter than the customary acre or half acre strips. It would be interesting to trace the origin of the word Castle as applied to this field. Can it possibly indicate an ancient fortified site?

Nothing has been found there to indicate such a possibility, but within a radius of a few hundred yards, finds of a stone celt, stone axe hammer, quern, and a stone mace head have been recorded (*Trans.* O.S. xiv, 442, xvi, 47; N.S. ix, 4; and xi, Add. Antiq.).

After crossing the Cassell the private right of way came to an end, where it joined the old highway from the Abbey,

at a point about three quarters of a mile from Barrow village, where the Barrow Central Station is now situated.

LIST OF MODERN ENCLOSURES.

1-2-3.	Sike Meadows	}	Stank Farm
4.	High Linecroft		
5.	Big "		
6.	Middle "		
7.	Low "		
8.	Little "		
9.	High Pascway Close	}	Bowesfield Farm
10.	Near " "		
11.	Far Long Croft		
12.	Near " "		
13.	Hare Hill	}	Holebeck Farm
14.	High Briar Hedge		
15.	Great " "		
16.	New Leys		
17.	Long Meadow		
17a.	Southers Meadow	—	Bridge Gate Farm
18.	Beacon Gill Meadow	}	To Newbarns
19.	Far Middle Hill		
20.	Near " "		
21-22.	Harrel		
23.	Rising Side Meadows	}	To Hawcoat
24-25-26.	Risedales		
27.	Risedale Ings		
28.	Back Castle	}	Barrow Public Park
29.	Fore "		
30.	Far "		
31.	Near "		
32.	Castle		
33.	Far Castle Potts		
34.	Near " "		